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ABSTRACT

A cooperative effort was made by the Chamber of Commerce and the Adult and Community Education Program to encourage and facilitate work force literacy in small and medium-sized businesses, industries, and government agencies in Gadsden County, Florida. Businesses that could benefit were identified through a business/industry questionnaire. Six businesses and two government agencies agreed to participate in the program, with approximately 50 employee participants involved during the year. In addition, 48 volunteer tutors were trained and 12 assigned during the project. Employees identified as potential participants for the project were evaluated using the Test of Adult Basic Education (which was also used as a posttest to measure progress). Ten employee participants succeeded in obtaining General Educational Development certificates during the project. A Workforce Literacy Advisory Council was established and continues to function. The project developed a pamphlet and a packet of materials to send to all businesses and industries in Gadsden County having 25 or more employees. The project was publicized through the media, and 26 site visits were made to businesses and government agencies for the purpose of promoting the project. (KC)

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ED 361 537

WORKFORCE GADSDEN

"BRIDGING THE GAP"

...an on-going cooperative effort between The Chamber of Commerce and the Adult and Community Education Program to encourage and facilitate Workforce Literacy in small and medium-sized businesses/industries and government agencies in Gadsden County, Florida

PRESENTED BY...

CE064502

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please return five copies within thirty days following the completion or termination of the project to:
Chief, Bureau of Adult and Community Education
Florida Department of Education
1244 Florida Education Center
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(904) 487-1619, SunCom 277-1619

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL, ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION
BUREAU OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

SECTION 353 PROJECT FINAL REPORT

Project Director:	Project Number:
Ray Blitch	200-19120-2S102

Agency Address:
500 West King Street
Quincy, Florida 32351

RECEIVED

Project Title:
Workforce Gadsden

Project Allocation:	Type of Project:	
$ 45,000	Special Demonstration	☒
	Teacher Training	☐

Final Report Directions

Section 353 projects must be forwarded by the state agency to the U. S. Division of Adult Learning for review. The state agency must also report the results and outcomes of these projects. In order for the Department to meet its commitment, it will be necessary for each project director to submit five copies of a final report to the Chief, Bureau of Adult and Community Education, at the address above within 30 days following the completion or termination of the project. The final report should follow the format indicated below and be limited to no more than three single-spaced, typed pages, not including the appendix.

Final Report Format

1. Target population served: (Use numbers if possible.)
2. Objectives: (See Attachment B)
3. Activities: (See Attachment C)
4. Evaluation: (Include processes used, conclusions about accomplishments or lack thereof, and reasons.)
5. Recommendations:
6. Dissemination plans:
7. Appendix: (Include instructional materials, products, forms, surveys and/or other materials developed as a result of the project.)

DVE 525
Exp. 01/31/93

State of Florida
Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida
Affirmative Action/equal opportunity employer

1. Target population served:

Targeted were employees in small to medium-sized businesses/industries and governmental agencies within Gadsden County's workforce that were identified as having literacy needs as related to job performance. A business and industry questionnaire (Attachment A) was used as the initial survey instrument to identify businesses having twenty-five (25) or more employees who may benefit from having a workforce literacy program for its employees.

2. Objectives:

Of the ten (10) stated objectives in the project eight (8) were significantly achieved during the project period (See Attachment B - Objectives).

3. Activities:

Activities reference each objective - See Attachment C

4. Evaluations:

The major instrument used for worker/student evaluations was the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) for pre-test and post-test purposes. However, individual progress was also measured by using reading, writing, critical thinking and computational samples from job-related materials as well as self-reports of participants and supervisor reports.

As to over-all project evaluation in terms of achieving the stated goal and subsequent objectives and activities to achieve the goal and objectives, it is estimated the project would receive an 85% success rate. The only problem encountered in this respect centered on the delay in project approval and implementation that placed time constraints on completing certain objectives.

5. Recommendations:

- More assistance needed in curriculum development that would result in a curriculum more closely tailored to the uniqueness of workforce education.
- Instructional personnel should receive more specialized training in teaching strategies for workforce classes - how to mesh job related materials into the workforce curriculum.
- More efforts needed in educating the business community as to the benefits of workforce education, both for the employer and employees.

6. Dissemination Plans:

Dissemination of the Workforce Gadsden project has occurred through a number of activities throughout the project period:

- Oral presentations:

  Florida Adult Literacy Policy Team Conference in Tallahassee, December 9, 1991; Florida Administrators of Adult and Community Education, Region I, December 5, 1991; Havana Chamber of Commerce, February 13, 1992; Mid-year Project Director's meeting in Tallahassee, February 26th-27th, 1992; Chattahoochee Rotary Club, January 1992; Florida Literacy Conference, West Palm Beach, March 10th-13th, 1992.

- "Workforce Gadsden" information pamphlet printed and disseminated to businesses and industries and governmental agencies within the county, and to various other sources to promote the program (pamphlet attached).

- Development and dissemination of a packet of materials to all businesses/ industries in Gadsden County having 25 or more employees. Packet contained:

  . cover letter
  . An Employer's Guide to Education in the Workplace: Facts, Program, and Resources
  . Workforce Gadsden pamphlet
  . Business/Industry questionnaire
  . article: At Work for Literacy, Dec., 1991, Gadsden County Schools Newsletter.

- Advertising of project through media sources

- On-site visits to 24 businesses and governmental agencies to promote Workforce Gadsden.

ATTACHMENT AND APPENDIX

ATTACHMENTS:

- Business and Industry Questionnaire — Attachment A
- Goal and Objectives — Attachment B
- Activities reference each objective — Attachment C

APPENDIX:

- Workforce Gadsden pamphlet, articles reference Workforce Gadsden
- Application for Exemplary Program Status in the ACE Network Clearinghouse - Spring, 1992 (accompanying memorandum dated May 20, 1992, and letter of selection dated June 24, 1992, and memorandum requesting presentation of Workforce Gadsden project at the ACE Conference.
- Minutes of Advisory Council meetings

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in to the best of your ability. Answer with percentages if you do not know exact numbers. Answer DO NOT KNOW if you do not have an estimate at all.

Name of Agency_____

Agency Address_____

_____Zip_____

Agency Phone #_____

Person Completing Survey_____

Title_____

1. How many different adults 16 and over do you have in your employ or in your membership each year? _____

2. How many of these employees/members do not speak English well?____

3. Do you require a written test for employment/membership/promotion?

   _____yes If yes, continue to question #4.

   _____no If no, proceed to question # 7.

4. How many potential members/employees have obvious literacy difficulties with this written test the first time they take it?_____

5. How many potential members/employees must take this test a second time?_____ third time?_____

6. If you find that an employee needs help with basic skills, do you refer him to a service provider in the community? If so, what is the name(s)?_____

7. How many of your employees/members have difficulty filling out forms or reading company/group literature?_____

8. In your opinion, if literacy instruction were free and easily available, would your employees/members be interested?

_____yes. If yes, proceed to question #10.

_____no If no, continue to question # 9.

9. Which of the following might your employees/members perceive as barriers to participation in adult literacy programs?

_____time/day services offered
_____fees or material costs
_____location of services
_____transportation
_____lack of awareness of service
_____stigma of illiteracy
_____child care
_____other, please specify_____
_____

10. Does or did your business/group provide literacy services of any kind?_____
If yes, please describe_____
_____

11. Do you believe that your employees/members could benefit from literacy classes?
_____yes _____no If no, why not ?_____
_____

12. Do you believe that adequate literacy services are available in our community?_____

13. Would you be supportive of an employee who admitted a need for literacy services? _____yes _____no If no, why not?_____
_____

14. If you could provide literacy services on your premises with little or no cost to you as an employer or group, would you be interested in learning more about how to set up such a service?_____yes _____no

If yes, under what circumstances would you be willing to provide in-house literacy services?_____
_____
_____

If no, why would you not be interested in an in-house literacy service?
_____
_____

Thank you for helping us by filling out this questionnaire.

Objectives:

Objective 1:

By June 30, 1992, 20 businesses and local governmental departments, employing at least 25 employees, will be identified as having workforce literacy needs as measured by the results of the business and industry questionnaire (see Attachment A).

Objective 2:

By June 30, 1992, at least 10 small businesses will have established work force literacy programs as measured by enrollment records for each business and written working agreements with Gadsden County Schools.

Objective 3:

By June 30, 1992, at least three local governmental departments in Gadsden County will have established workforce literacy programs as measured by enrollment records of each department and written working agreements with Gadsden County Schools.

Objective 4:

By June 30, 1992, at least 40 employee participants in this project will demonstrate progress toward narrowing the gap between their literacy level and what their jobs require as measured by improved job evaluations; by improved reading, writing, critical thinking and computational samples; by scores on an objective test such as T.A.B.E. and self-reports of the participants.

Objective 5:

At least 20 employees of participating small businesses and government departments will have received one-to-one instruction from specially trained volunteer tutors by June 30, 1992, as measured by project records.

Objective 6:

By June 30, 1992, at least 25 employee participants will have succeeded in obtaining GED certificates of graduation as measured by school and Floida Department of Education records.

Objective 7:

By March 15, 1992, at least one pilot English as a Second Language (ESL) workforce literacy site will be instructing a minimum of 10 LEP (Limited English Proficient) students for a minimum of 2 hours per week as measured by project records.

Objective 8:

By June 30, 1992, a "Management Handbook for the Development of Workforce Literacy Programs in Small to Medium-sized Businesses" will be published as measured by the handbook itself.

Objective 9:

By June 30, 1992, at least 60 adult education directors, 60 chambers of commerce, 150 personnel specialists in small or medium-sized businesses and 30 local government departments will have copies of this handbook as measured by a distribution mailing list.

Objective 10:

By June 30, 1992, an advisory council, composed of educational provider, chamber of commerce, business, government and employee consumer representatives, will advocate for, facilitate and seek resources for workforce literacy in Gadsden County as measured by minutes of bi-monthly meetings.

ACTIVITIES:

Reference Objective #1:

- One full-time project Instructor/Coordinator was employed November 1, 1991.
- Workforce Literacy surveys were conducted at 35 small businesses and three (3) local government agencies.
- Written working agreement to participate in the establishment of workforce literacy programs were signed by six (6) businesses and two (2) local government agencies.

Reference Objectives #2 and #3:

Five (5) businesses and two (2) government agencies established workforce literacy programs with additional businesses signing working agreements.

Reference Objective #4:

Approximately fifty (50) employee participants demonstrated progress in the workforce literacy programs during the year.

Reference Objective #5:

A written working agreement was executed between LVA, Inc., Gadsden County and Gadsden's Adult and Community Education. A number of employee participants have received one-to-one instruction from specially trained volunteer tutors. Forty-eight (48) volunteer tutors were trained for possible assignment to workforce literacy programs. Twelve (12) trained tutors were assigned to Workforce Literacy programs. LVA-Gadsden County is working with the project instructor/coordinator on an on-going basis to identify those employees to whom the tutors will be assigned.

Reference Objective #6:

Ten (10) employee participants succeeded in obtaining GED certificates of graduation during the project period.

Reference Objective #7:

Two (2) businesses, Quincy Farms and Beefstake Tomato Company, were identified as ESL workforce literacy sites. A survey conducted at Quincy Farms revealed that approximately 80 employees are interested in an ESL program at the job site. Plans are in final stages for classes to be established.

Reference Objectives #8 and #9:

Some progress made reference research and compilation of data. Number 9 relates to #8.

Reference Objective #10:

A Workforce Literacy Advisory Council was established and continues to function. It is composed of representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, business, government, educational provider, employee participants, and the project teacher/coordinator. See attached record of minutes of meetings.

Other Activities:

- Development of Workforce Gadsden pamphlet (copy attached)
- Development of packet of materials to send to all business/industry in Gadsden County having 25 or more employees.

  Packet contained:

  - cover letter
  - an Employer's Guide to Education in the Workplace - Facts, program and resources
  - Workforce Gadsden pamphlet
  - Business/Industry Questionnaire
  - article: At Work for Literacy, printed in Decmeber 1991 issue of Newsletter of the Gadsden County Public Schools.

- Advertising of project through media sources
- On site visits to twenty-six (26) businesses and government agencies within Gadsden County to promote the Workforce Gadsden Project, in addition to a number of visits to civic organizations.

WORKFORCE GADSDEN

"BRIDGING THE GAP"

...an on-going cooperative effort between
The Chamber of Commerce and the
Adult and Community Education Program
to encourage and facilitate
Workforce Literacy in small and
medium-sized businesses/industries
and government agencies in
Gadsden County, Florida

PRESENTED BY...

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOLS' ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE

GADSDEN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Robert H. Bryant
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Arylis Parramore, Director
Adult/Community & Vocational Education

Rick McCaskill
Executive Director
Chamber of Commerce
Gadsden County

Ray Blitch, Principal
Adult and Community Education

H.W. Bailey
Project Instructor/Coordinator

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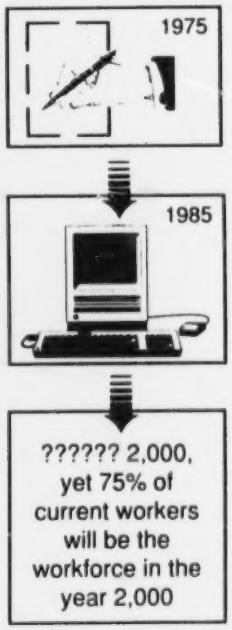
BACKGROUND: AMERICA'S HIDDEN WORKFORCE CRISIS

On a broad prospective America is in the midst of a workforce crisis characterized by high employee turnover, alarming accident rates and safety violations, cost overruns, equipment malfunctions, and customer complaints – all pointing to a dilemma faced in America's workplaces. Such is a problem that is difficult to detect, but it has its roots in the growing number of ill-prepared workers, the increasing complexity of jobs, and the growing diversity of the American workforce.

WHO'S AT RISK:

At risk are key American industries and businesses, along with those employees who make up the front line workforce. According to a recent report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, **America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages,** "well over 20 percent of our students drop out of high school – almost 50 percent in many of our inner cities. They go on to make up **more than a third of our frontline workforce".** The report goes on to say "what we are facing is an economic cliff of sorts and the frontline working people in America are about to fall off it". Increasingly employers are discovering that many experienced workers are marginally equipped with the necessary skills to do their present job, not to mention those basic competencies necessary for emerging new jobs.

It is anticipated that 21 million new jobs will be created by the year 2000 – a 19 percent growth rate (Goodwill Forum – **Literacy: Implications for Industry and Individuals).** Couple this with the fact that 75 percent of today's workforce will be the workforce in the



year 2000, the need for workforce training and retraining takes on greater meaning. Furthermore, a projection of workforce demands, conducted by the Hudson Institute, predicts that only 27 percent of all new jobs will be in the low skill category by the year 2000 compared to 40 percent in 1987. That is, jobs requiring low skills are disappearing.

Finally, the U.S. Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in its June 1991 report, predicted "if you (industry) do not develop a world-class workforce, your business inevitably will be at risk".

THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM:

The workforce crisis problem is not one that can be measured in terms of reading grade levels or by the number of high school diplomas issued – **it is simply a performance problem on the job** – an inability of the worker to apply basic skills to specific job duties – to translate and use information to solve simple problems or accomplish routine tasks in the workplace. Specifically, the problem is one of **Functional Illiteracy.** This problem is serious... the time to act is now! Employers must make sure that those employees within their workforce with basic skill deficiencies have access to job literacy training programs that will help to improve their job performance which will, in turn, improve performance for the company.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM LOCALLY:

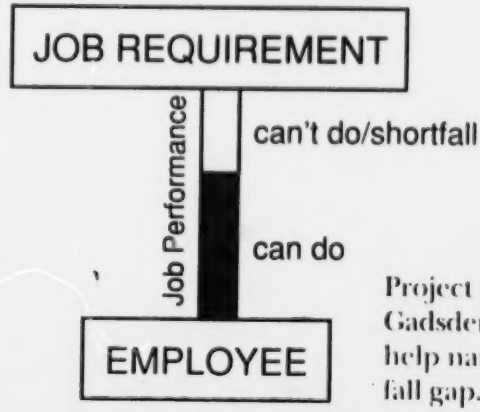
Employment in Gadsden County is moving toward the areas of manufacturing, services, and government. These areas require different job performance skills than the agricultural and forestry based employment of the past. Furthermore, with a 36 percent functional illiteracy rate (below 8th grade level) and a 16 percent basic illiteracy rate (below 4th grade level), Gadsden County has an undereducated workforce population from which industries/business and government agencies can draw. Add to this an increasing number of low English proficient permanent residents (approximately 3000) and the problem is even more severe.

In response to this, the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce has joined the Gadsden County Schools' Adult and Community Education Program to assess and address the problem of workforce literacy within the

County. Toward this end a Workforce Literacy Project entitled **"Workforce Gadsden"** has been approved and funded through the State Department of Education.

PROJECT: "WORKFORCE GADSDEN"

This project establishes a system for the on-going assessment of workforce literacy needs in the County as well as a system for providing workforce literacy programs to businesses, local government departments and individual employees within the County. Functional aspects of the program consist of surveys to determine interest among employers and employees reference training needs, particularly as such needs relate to job performance. Actual materials from the workplace are custom designed to fit the requirements of specific job tasks critical to a company's profit and competitiveness. Specifically, what an employee's needs are will be determined by the shortfall between **what the employee can do,** based on his/her literacy level, and **what the job requires.** Assessment will measure progress toward narrowing that gap.



Project "Workforce Gadsden" is designed to help narrow this shortfall gap.

That is, the Workforce Literacy program links instruction with specific job materials and job situations by teaching skills application as they are actually used on the job. The program is supported by trained volunteers with one-to-one tutoring being provided by Literacy Volunteers of America – (LVA) – Gadsden County, for those worker/students unable to join small groups or classes at the work site or at a nearby convenient site.

An Advisory Council consisting of representatives from the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce, the Gadsden County Schools, Literacy Volunteers of America – Gadsden County, and participating businesses and local governments, will oversee and evaluate the progress of this project.

SUMMARY:

In Gadsden County job tasks that remained the same for decades suddenly are changing. These changing job duties in the workplace require workers to retool their skills and knowledge to meet the demands of new procedures and equipment. At the same time, the business/industry community is faced with new challenges in an effort to maximize profits and remain competitive in a global economy. With fewer qualified workers available to enter the work force and the increasing complexity of current jobs, plus emerging new jobs, there is the obvious need to value more highly and invest more heavily in the existing work force. To this end, Work Force Gadsden is dedicated to helping our prized businesses and industries and government agencies throughout Gadsden County to maximize their greatest potential through the county's Work Force Literacy Program.

PROGRAM CONTACTS:

Ray Blitch, Principal
Adult and Community Education
(904) 627-6775

H.W. Bailey
Program Instructor/Coordinator
(904) 627-6775

WORKFORCE EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Benefits and savings to businesses from a better prepared workforce include:

- Reduced number of costly production errors.
- Increased productivity and product quality.
- Increased employee loyalty to employer.
- Decreased employee turnover.
- Reduced hiring costs.
- Increased job safety.
- Reduced accident rates and lower insurance costs.
- Increased promotability of existing workforce
- Improved communication with customers.

Benefits of participation in workplace education for employees include:

- Increased earning potential

A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IS ESTIMATED TO BE WORTH AN EXTRA $109,000 IN LIFETIME EARNINGS, AND A COLLEGE EDUCATION IS WORTH AN EXTRA $226,000.

- Improved job performance
- Advancement in career path
- Upgraded skill levels
- Increased self-confidence and self-sufficiency
- Savings on transportation costs, course fees, child care costs, and time by participation in worksite programs.

Community-Wide Benefits include:

- Increased economic development due to the availability of a well trained workforce
- More effective use of tax dollars and community resources
- More responsible and better informed consumers for business' products and services.

NOTES

GADSDEN ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM
500 West King Street
Quincy, FL 32351